

Q and A Section

QUESTION: Will the individuals who were affected by stop-loss get to come home earlier than the 15 months?

COL Battaglia: First, we need to stop and ask what our orders say. Our orders say we are here for a 15 month deployment. Division and Brigade Commanders are currently discussing our conditions. Conditions are fluid and there are a lot of unknowns. We are currently addressing the unknowns as the conditions with our allies, coalition partners, current forces and upcoming elections for Iraq. The bottom line is we are here for a 15 month deployment until we hear different. We expect if there will be any updates to our conditions we will hear them beginning in February of next year.

QUESTION: Will our soldiers get the additional \$1000 for extended deployment date even if the enlistment date expires while they are down range?

COL Battaglia: If the program receives approval, yes. They will get the additional \$1000 if they meet the requirements for the program.

CSM Rodriguez: Past units have received the additional money but it is too hard to tell right now.

QUESTION: Are their currently steps being taken to reduce casual pay transactions as opposed to advance pay being taken out in one lump sum?

COL Battaglia: Soldiers do not have to take it per month. However, if chain of command finds he needs to they will work with the soldier to get a better understanding of their scenario.

CSM Rodriguez: Finance is starting to monitor soldiers on this particular subject.

Audience QUESTION: This question has to do with the 15 month deployment. Soldier currently works with a General office of 10th Mountain Division. They are currently stopping R&R in May. Is it not an indication that our soldiers will in fact be part of a 12 month rotation as opposed to 15 months? Will the timeline be shortened?

COL Battaglia: We are in the 15 month deployment mind frame. Yes, EML dates are organized out to May but those are finished in April. Do not read into anything. Our focus is on the mission and today and tomorrow. I will gladly be the first to tell you if we were to find out that our deployment will be any shorter than 15 months.

CSM Rodriguez: We have 4,000 soldiers currently we are trying to get through EML.

QUESTION: Why is it taking so long for mail to get from Talil to Hunter?

COL Battaglia: Mail comes to Talil. Once it gets there, it is broken down by battalion. Then it gets to the destination either by air or convoys. Sometimes bad weather or aircraft maintenance will cause us to cancel a flight and it may take a couple of extra days. Your soldier may also be out on patrol or unavailable to get their mail from time to time. This may cause a couple of extra days lag as well.

CSM Rodriguez: Expect 21+ days for mail to get to FOBs outside of Adder.

Audience continuation of the question: But it has taken 8 weeks to receive a box what is the hold up in the mail? That is far more than 21+ days.

COL Battaglia invites Zach Wright back to further iterate the answer to the question: It takes us typically 21+ days to get mail. It also depends on where it is sent from as well. Our mail funnels through Hunter. Some people order online or it gets lost as well.

COL Battaglia: Frankly Ma'am, I do not know. We will continue to work on it.

QUESTION: With the recent casualties has there been a change in method of operations based on the sustained casualties?

COL Battaglia: Every day we look at what and how and we take measures to protect ourselves and one another. All it takes is one time. Daily way of business for us is to protect and analyze how we can be less vulnerable.

CSM Rodriguez: Our duties are being executed regardless of location. They are being conducted in a professionally and respectfully manner as well.

QUESTION: Will foreign language qualification pay continue if the qualifications expire while downrange?

COL Battaglia: Yes and thank you for asking this question. I read the question and saw the answer and made the update. Language pay will extend with the soldier through the deployment plus one or two months after. They need to see the Battalion S-1 and amend their orders and their pay will continue. But they must go through the Battalion S-1 and amend those orders.

QUESTION: Is the stabilization waiver going to make it possible for soldiers to be released in less than 90 days?

COL Battaglia: Stabilization waiver is something that can be waived. It is in place for re-integration and to help stabilize the family and community. It helps us make sure there is proper training and screening for the soldiers as they come home.

CSM Rodriguez: The 90 days is in place to protect soldiers and is purely for their benefit.

Audience Question: Are their steps to ensure absentee ballots get to the soldiers in time and their vote will be received in time to count for this election?

COL Battaglia: This question goes to the S-1 and voting. We have pushed and provided opportunity to register and receive ballots. The system is working. We have not had any problems with elections and voting so far this year.

S-1 responds: We haven't had issues yet. Ballots must be post marked by the 4th of November. That is the absentee standard.

QUESTION: Are there any current plans to get dining facilities to all of the COBs?

COL Battaglia: All of the COBs, No. There are not enough materials and cooks to provide all COBs with dining facilities. There are simply too many COBs to do something like that. We are constantly trying to rotate soldiers in and out to get all soldiers hot showers and meals.

CSM Rodriguez: We are trying to get all soldiers in and out consistently and it is slow. We will get there eventually.

QUESTION: We are hearing rumor that we will re-deploy to Afghanistan in 2010. What information can you provide to us on this rumor at this point in time?

COL Battaglia: Not at this time. I don't know. I haven't heard or seen an indication of this.

QUESTION: Sir, what is your best bet on the Army/Navy game?

COL Battaglia: Not going to touch that one. At this point, I would like to open our floor here and get some of our soldiers in and let them talk to you all about their current conditions I will give them a chance and let them say hello.

LTC Simerly 27BSB: We have completed over 85 convoys, tracked 140,000 miles accident free. We've completed 3,000 maintenance jobs and treated over 3,000 patients. We've been very busy. We are also training Iraqis to sustain themselves. We're preparing for the Thanksgiving meal at every post trying to get the meal out to every location. We want to make it a special meal for everyone. We're also letting everyone know that 21 November is the latest for holiday packages to get to Adder in time for the holiday season. We know it takes longer for it to get to the other COBs so we're saying get those packages in the mail as soon as possible. Time is passing quickly here and we'll be looking back at November as the 6 month mark in this deployment.

LTC Norton and CSM Eger from 1-9: Doing great. We're pretty spread out over 8 different places. We are rotating Gerry Owen back to Adder trying to get everyone the sights and experience. We are trying to keep soldiers moving.

MAJ Wooten from 1-9: As far as Hunter and mail go things are going well. Most of our mail is moving by ground. We're saying an extra 24-72 hours to Alshid. Our DFAC is up and operational. We'll have showers within next week. Mail is going out every 5-9 days. It goes out of our post office at Adder and the mailman locks it up and puts it on an airplane.

MAJ Rone 2-12 CAV: Our soldiers are doing an outstanding job. Everyone is doing well. We are being seen through by our leadership.

QUESTION: Will soldiers get a chance to update records for the E-7 board?

CSM Rodriguez: Yes, being used through AKO digital signature which is the current army standard.

QUESTION: This is for the Rear Detachment Operations, Is there some kind of provision that would allow the Next of Kin to come to Fort Hood to see the Memorial Ceremony for their individual fallen soldier?

CPT Charles-Walters: The service really is intended for the unit, soldiers and army organization. Funds for family members are not authorized through the army appropriated funds and cannot be paid for with unit funds.

QUESTION: Will the soldiers who deploy later in the deployment get EML? Will they have a cut off date for leave?

COL Battaglia: We have set a schedule for soldiers to take leave all the way to April. Soldiers have to be deployed a total of **270** days to receive EML.

QUESTION: What kind of medical assets are available within the footprint forward?

COL Battaglia: On every post we have medical personnel. We have soldiers in addition to Doctors and medical professionals throughout Iraq. We also have aerial medi-vac available.

DCO: We're doing great and accomplishing our missions.

Chaplain: Planning Holiday events and services so soldiers can enjoy their time. Pushing out to COBs to get around and see everyone. We're taking preventative measures to take care of combat stress. We have as well the Air Force have people going out to FOBs and Cobs. Chaplains and specialists are working together to talk with soldiers throughout situations here.

QUESTION TO CHAPLAIN: Are soldiers reading their Bibles regularly?

Chaplain: We're encouraging it.

QUESTION: Will soldiers be getting their flu shots before they come home on EML? It is the flu season back in the states and we do not want them getting sick when they should be enjoying their time, not suffering from the flu.

COL Battaglia: Yes. If they go in and get them, they will have their flu shots. They are available to everyone here.